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The Director of Central Intelligence  
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

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25 October 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH: Chairman, National Intelligence Council  
Vice Chairman, National Intelligence Council

FROM: Fritz W. Ermarth  
National Intelligence Officer for USSR

SUBJECT: Conference on US-Soviet Relations

1. On 18-19 October I attended a major conference on US-Soviet relations in Los Angeles. Secretary Shultz made an important policy speech to the participants, plus guest-dignitaries. Participants included most of the influential "policy relevant" Sovietologists.

2. While valuable and interesting, the conference was also disappointing in an important respect: With the exception of Dick Pipes, none of the participants articulated a clear image of how Soviet internal problems (economy, society, leadership) might make the USSR a tougher or perhaps even easier partner to deal with in the years ahead. Pipes characterized the USSR's alternative futures as war, collapse, or reform; the chances that reform will be pursued are better than usual; the US should on the whole hang tough as the best means to promote this. Although I happen to agree with Pipes, I tried to coax other participants to state their basic assumptions about the internal-external nexus by suggesting that perhaps modest changes of the Soviet national policy agenda might be in the offing, e.g., toward internal investment, away from military power building and power projection. But most experts did not respond.

3. The authoritative majority of the group was "liberal pragmatist" (a la Marshall Shulman - Bill Hyland). Their basic case was that the USSR is aggressive, paranoid, nasty and will remain so. But the main fault for bad US-Soviet relations really lies on the US Administration for treating them as such. The burden lies on the US to put out the welcome mat.

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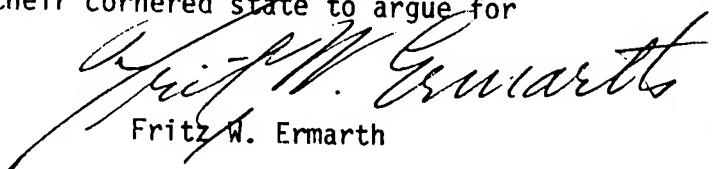
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4. I came away with the feeling that this very representative body of US private/academic specialists on the USSR has been left behind by larger developments inside the USSR and in the US-Soviet strategic competition.

5. Secretary Shultz's speech was an attempt to give a "conceptual" treatment of US policy to a high-brow audience at a very political moment. It was a model balancing act: The USSR is a nasty adversary and must be contained; on the other hand, we are willing to talk and will not engage in gratuitous linkage in the manner of Carter's post-Afghanistan moves. Most heard this as signalling moves by the Administration after November.

6. At Tab A is a list of participants. Tab B is the closing passage of Bill Hyland's very representative paper which interestingly exploits the notion that the Soviets may lash out from their cornered state to argue for more accommodating US policies.



Fritz W. Ermhart

Attachments: As stated

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Conference on

A

U.S. SOVIET RELATIONS: THE NEXT PHASE  
(October 18-19, 1984)

PARTICIPANTS

Hannes Adomeit, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik  
Arthur Alexander, The Rand Corporation  
Alex Alexiev, The Rand Corporation  
Jeremy Azrael, State Department  
Abe Becker, The Rand Corporation  
Seweryn Bialer, Columbia University  
Robert Blackwill, Harvard University  
George Breslauer, University of California, Berkeley  
Scott Bruckner, CSSIB fellow  
Larry Caldwell, Occidental College  
David Cattell, University of California, Los Angeles  
Rosemarie Crisostomo, CSSIB fellow  
Sharyl Cross, CSSIB fellow  
Alexander Dallin, Stanford University  
Lili Dzirkals, The Rand Corporation  
Fritz Ermarth, Central Intelligence Agency  
Lubov Fajfer-Wong, CSSIB fellow  
Frank Fukuyama, The Rand Corporation  
Harry Gelman, The Rand Corporation  
G. Allen Greb, Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation  
Laura Holmgren, CSSIB fellow  
Arnold Horelick, The Rand Corporation  
William Hyland, Council on Foreign Relations  
Michael Intriligator, University of California, Los Angeles  
Ross Johnson, The Rand Corporation  
Michael Klecheski, The Rand Corporation  
Roman Kolkowicz, University of California, Los Angeles  
Andrzej Korbonski, University of California, Los Angeles

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Ben Lambeth, The Rand Corporation  
Gail Lapidus, University of California, Berkeley  
Robert Legvold, Columbia University  
Edward Luck, United Nations Association of the United States of America  
Jack Matlock, National Security Council  
Fritz Mosher, The Carnegie Corporation  
Joseph Nye, Harvard University  
Ray Orbach, University of California, Los Angeles  
Richard Pipes, Harvard University  
Alan Platt, The Rand Corporation  
William Potter, University of California, Los Angeles  
Don Rice, The Rand Corporation  
Hans Rogger, University of California, Los Angeles  
Dennis Ross, Berkeley-Stanford Program on Soviet International Behavior  
Brent Scowcroft, Henry Kissinger Associates  
Marshall Shulman, Columbia University  
Dmitri Simes, Carnegie Endowment  
Helmut Sonnenfeldt, The Brookings Institute  
Peter Staugaard, CSSIB fellow  
Strobe Talbott, Time, Inc  
Vladimir Treml, University of California, Berkeley  
John VanOudenaren, The Rand Corporation  
Ted Warner, The Rand Corporation  
Daniel Yankelovich, Yankelovich, Skelly & White  
Charles Wolf, The Rand Corporation  
Warren Zimmerman, Council on Foreign Relations/State Department

Quotation from paper by William G. Hyland, Council on Foreign Relations,  
"The US and the USSR: Rebuilding Relations"

The Soviet strategic position is indeed declining. It is faced by a strategic encirclement: the US, Europe, China and Japan. It has made almost no progress in breaking up this coalition. It cannot bring itself to make the concessions that China demands; it cannot grant the territory that Japan wants back; it cannot impose its demands on the United States or split the US from West Europe. And so it faces stark choices. One is the choice that is being aired in a non-classified CIA memorandum -- the "breakout option." (The Wall Street Journal, September 17, 1984). It is not an idle view: indeed, that was one of several Soviet motives in Afghanistan. And that area along the USSR southern flank remains a potential vulnerability (especially Pakistan). But an alternative is to explore American terms for a modus vivendi. For the US this imposes a familiar dual obligation: to be prepared to resist Soviet advances and encroachments, but also to be prepared to negotiate on accommodation. Over the past five years, the US has put itself in a better position to carry out the containment side of its policy, but now it needs to organize the diplomatic side. If it does so with a policy of small steps, the result is likely to be a continuing stalemate. Indeed, the US might even inadvertently drive the USSR into a dangerous corner. But if the US can outline a broad basis for resuming a strategic dialogue, then it maximizes its chances of drawing the USSR into a safer relationship. And that is, after all, what American foreign policy is all about.

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